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from which to measure the degree of departure. The study of dependents, etc., has failed both of scientific accuracy and profitable reforms on account of the variously vague notions regarding normal man and the consequent direction which reform should take. Those who begin with the study of the abnormal, usually assume, at least unconsciously, that the normal is largely present in society and is static. The abnormal needs, therefore, to be conformed to it. As a matter of fact, the normal does not exist except as an evolving fact, and the abnormal is an incident of it, a lateral moraine of the moving glacier of society. Only the glacier and the law of its movement can explain the moraine. Social pathology is an exceedingly important science belonging to a secondary group—criminology, y of classes, etc.”

This brief presentation of many conflicting opinions is far from satisfactory. But my task is not to clear up ideas about sociology, but to show the chaotic condition of sociological thought.

The inability of sociology to answer certain questions, scientific and pedagogic, only shows what every sociologist admits, that the science is in a more or less undefined and tentative position. It does not disprove the existence of the science. “Sociology exists,” as Herbert Spencer wrote, “because there exists a social organism.” It is still a very incomplete science. The same may be said of all the other concrete sciences. Sociology is far behind many of them, but they have all passed through their formative periods, and faced the objections of irrelevancy and futility. There was a time when physics and astronomy “belonged to the divine classes of phenomena in which human research was insane, fruitless and impious.” But they have outlived these objections. And so also will sociology.

Chicago.

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THE IMPROVEMENT OF COUNTRY ROADS IN MASSACHUSETTS AND NEW YORK.

The improvement of country roads is a subject that is rightly receiving a large amount of attention on the part of scholars and men of business. The marked inferiority of the highways in America as compared with those of European countries has led to an earnest attempt by several States to inaugurate a reform. What has been done is but a beginning; the demand for better roads may be expected to strengthen with the increase of intelligence on the subject and as the necessity for them becomes greater because of the growth in the density of population. More has been done by New York and Massachusetts than by the other States, and the laws passed last year by these two States may well be referred to.

Massachusetts has frequently been in the van of movements for reform, and so she is in the attempt to secure good roads. The Legislature, in 1892, passed "An Act to Establish a Commission to Improve the Highways" of the Commonwealth. This commission made a report, February, 1893,* in which were discussed the topography of the State, the road material of Massachusetts, the condition of Massachusetts roads, the economics of Massachusetts roads, and methods of construction. The report was made by George A. Perkins, W. E. McClintock and N. S. Shaler, and contained a good deal of valuable information.

In June, following this report, the Legislature passed an act establishing a permanent "highway commission [of three men] to improve the public roads" and defining its powers and duties. The main features of this act are contained in section six, which reads as follows:

"Whenever the county commissioners of a county adjudge that the common necessity and convenience require that the Commonwealth acquire as a State highway a new or an existing road in that county, they may apply by petition in writing to the Massachusetts Highway Commission, stating the road they recommend, and setting forth a detailed description of said road by metes and bounds, together with a plan and profile of the same. Said commission shall consider such petition, and if they adjudge that it ought to be allowed, they shall in writing so notify said county commissioners. It shall then become the duty of said county commissioners to cause said road to be surveyed and laid out in the manner provided for the laying out and alteration of highways, the entire expense thereof to be borne and paid by said county. Said county commissioners shall preserve a copy of such petition, plans and profiles with their records for public inspection. When said commission shall be satisfied that said county commissioners have properly surveyed and laid out said road, and set in place suitable monuments, and have furnished said commission with plans and profiles, on which shall be shown such monuments and established grades, in accordance with the rules and regulations of said commission, said commission may approve the same, and so notify in writing said county commissioners. Said commission shall then present a certified copy of said petition, on which their approval shall be indicated, together with their estimates for constructing said road and the estimated annual cost for maintaining the same, to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, who shall at once lay the same before the Legislature, if it is in session, otherwise on the second Wednesday of January following. If the Legislature makes appropriation for constructing said road, said commission shall cause said road to be constructed in accordance with this act, and when completed and approved by them, said road shall become a State highway and thereafter shall be maintained by the Commonwealth under the supervision of said commission."

Massachusetts has thus established a State Commission, one of whose powers enables it to co-operate with the county commissioners in the conversion of the more important roads into State highways under State control. The commissioners appointed in 1892 were reappointed under the act of 1893.

* "Highways of Massachusetts." Report of the Commission to Improve the Highways of the Commonwealth. February, 1893. Pp. 238. Boston: 1893.

New York is trying the county system, as recommended by Governor Flower. The Legislature passed an act in the spring of 1893,* by means of which

"The board of supervisors of any county may, by a concurring vote of at least a majority of the members thereof, by resolution, adopt the county road system, and shall, as soon as practicable after the adoption of such resolution, cause to be designated as county roads such portions of the public highways in such county not within an incorporated village or city as they shall deem advisable. . . . The roads so designated shall, as far as practicable, be leading market roads in such county."

Each county adopting this system shall have an engineer appointed by the board of supervisors. "The expense of maintaining the county roads of each county shall be a county charge."

New York now has three systems of road-making: (1) The town system by which the taxpayers are allowed to work out their assessments; this is known as "The Labor System of Taxation." (2) The town system having "The Money System of Taxation." (3) The county system as provided for by the law of 1893. The adoption of the money system of taxation is optional with the town; the county system, as stated above, depends upon the will of the county supervisors.

Shortly after the passage of the law making the county system permissive, the New York Legislature provided for the publication and distribution of a "Highway Manual of New York,"† containing a compilation of the highway laws of the State, defining the powers and duties of highway officers and resident taxpayers, and giving diagrams and practical suggestions and directions for grading, building roads, etc. The manual, as prepared by N. S. Spalding, assisted by three Commissioners of Statutory Revision, Daniel Magone, Charles A. Collin and John J. Linson, is a well-arranged compendium of the laws of New York. The part devoted to "Practical Suggestions on Highway Construction and Maintenance," though well done, does not equal the work of the Massachusetts Commission. The manual of New York was distributed free of charge among town clerks and the highway commissioners and overseers throughout the State, and was sold to other persons at seventy-five cents a copy. It was a wise method of promoting a greater intelligence concerning good roads.

It is yet too early to judge of the workings of these laws. They are both permissive, rather than mandatory in character. They put both the State and county systems on trial. The results will be noted with interest.

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*Laws of 1893, chapter 333.

†"Highway Manual of the State of New York." Published in pursuance of Chapter 655 of the Laws of 1893. Pp. 359. Albany: 1893.